



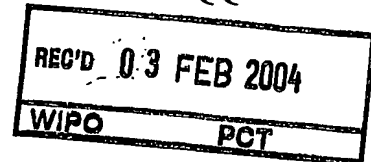
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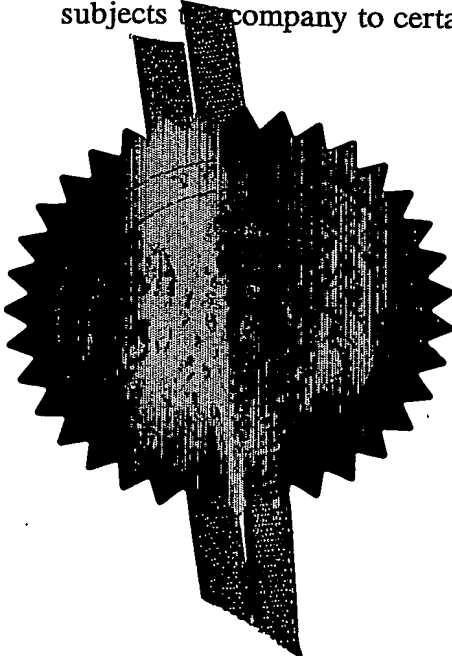
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GB0225773.1

By virtue of a direction given under Section 30 of the Patents Act 1977, the application is proceeding in the name of

B CONSULTANTS LIMITED,
Incorporated in the United Kingdom,
1-3 Leonard Street,
LONDON,
EC2A 4AQ,
United Kingdom

[ADP No. 08544355001]

Patents Act 1977
(Rule 16)

Request for grant of a patent

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06NOV02 E761143-1 D02882
P01/7760 0.00-0225773 The Patent Office

Concept House
Cardiff Road
Newport
South Wales NP10 8QQ

1. Your reference SEM/60768/000

2. Patent application number

(The Patent Office will fill in this part)

0225773.1

05 NOV 2002

3. Full name, address and postcode of the or of each applicant (underline all surnames)

Box Consultants Limited
1-3 Leonard Street
London EC2A 4AQ

SECTION 90 (1977) ACT

7879307001

Patents ADP number (if you know it)

If the applicant is a corporate body, give the country/state of its incorporation

UK

4. Title of the invention

DISPLAY SYSTEM COVER

5. Name of your agent (if you have one)

BOULT WADE TENNANT

"Address for service" in the United Kingdom to which all correspondence should be sent (including the postcode)

VERULAM GARDENS
70 GRAY'S INN ROAD
LONDON WC1X 8BT

Patents ADP number (if you know it)

42001

6. If you are declaring priority from one or more earlier patent applications, give the country and the date of filing of the or of each of these earlier applications and (if you know it) the or each application number

Country

Priority application number
(if you know it)

Date of filing
(day/month/year)

7. If this application is divided or otherwise derived from an earlier UK application, give the number and the filing date of the earlier application

Number of earlier application

Date of filing
(day / month / year)

8. Is a statement of inventorship and of right to grant of a patent required in support of this request?

Y

(Answer 'Yes' if:

- a) any applicant named in part 3 is not an inventor, or
- b) there is an inventor who is not named as an applicant, or
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Description 7
Claim(s) 3
Abstract 7
Drawing(s) 3-4

10. If you are also filing any of the following, state how many against each item.

Priority documents

Translations of priority documents

Statement of inventorship and right to grant of a patent (Patents Form 7/77)

Request for preliminary examination and search (Patents Form 9/77) 1

Request for substantive examination (Patents Form 10/77)

Any other documents (Please specify)

11. I/We request the grant of a patent on the basis of this application.

Signature

Date

Sarah E Merrifield

5 November 2002

12. Name and daytime telephone number of person to contact in the United Kingdom Sarah E Merrifield 020 7430 7500

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DISPLAY SYSTEM COVER

The present invention relates to an assembly for covering a visual display system which improves the optical and physical performance of the system.

It is known to provide visual displays made up of an array of pixels, with each pixel being created by a light source such as an LED or the end face of an optical fibre. Such visual displays can be used for informational signage, advertising, relaying TV pictures, art installations and so on. However, such displays suffer from a number of disadvantages. The angle at which the screen can be viewed and the distance from which it can be viewed in order to see a reasonably coherent and legible image are relatively limited. The optical performance and legibility even when viewed within the preferred ranges is not particularly great since the image tends to appear as dots of colour on a black background. The visual displays require additional modification, at great expense, in order to make them weatherproof for use outdoors and such systems have limited loadbearing capacities and cannot be used as structural members.

It is also known to use an array of CRT, plasma or LCD screens covered by thick glass sheets produce a large display. However, the size is still limited and the overall image produced is disrupted by the relatively thick edges to the individual TV screens.

The present invention provides an assembly for covering a visual display means which has an array of pixels, the assembly comprising an array of cells with reflective walls and an opening at each end, and a transparent cover sheet adjacent the open end of the cells on one side of the array, wherein the array is

dimensioned such that in use each cell is aligned with one pixel of the visual display means.

5 Preferably, the cells are contiguous and may be
in the form of open ended tubes. In a preferred
embodiment, the cells are formed from a honeycomb mesh
of adjacent hexagonal cells. Alternatively, the cells
may be formed by a mesh with substantially square
apertures. In a further alternative, each cell may
10 comprise a parabolic reflector with an opening in the
centre of the base for alignment with a pixel of the
visual display means. In a further alternative, each
cell may comprise a light guide.

15 The walls of the cells may be provided with a
surface treatment to increase reflectivity.

 Additionally, a lens may be provided in each cell
to capture substantially all of the light from the
20 pixel.

 The cover sheet preferably comprises glass or
plastic. The assembly may also comprise a bottom sheet
to create a load bearing structure and may also
25 provide a weather proofing capability to protect the
visual display means.

 To improve the optical performance, the cover
sheet may be moulded to form a lens aligned with each
30 cell of the array. The cover sheet may also have a
surface treatment applied to improve the optical
characteristics.

 Further option to improve the optical performance
35 is to include lens means between the array of cells
and the cover sheet, aligned with the walls of the
cells, to allow diffusion of light between adjacent

cells. The lens means may be in the form of adhesive used between the cells and the cover sheet.

5 The present invention also provides a visual display system comprising an assembly as described above secured to a visual display means having an array of pixels, such that the array of cells is sandwiched between the cover sheet and the visual display means.

10

The invention will now be described in detail, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

15 Figure 1 is a schematic cross sectional view of part of a first embodiment of the present invention in combination with a visual display means, along the line A-A in Figure 2;

20 Figure 2 is a schematic plan view of part of the first embodiment shown in Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a schematic plan view of part of a second embodiment of the present invention;

25

Figure 4 is a schematic plan view of part of a third embodiment of the present invention;

30 Figure 5 is a schematic plan view of part of a fifth embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 6 is a schematic cross sectional view through part of a fifth embodiment of the present invention; and

35

Figure 7 is a schematic cross sectional view of a further feature of the invention, applicable to all of

the embodiments.

Figure 1 is a cross section through a first
embodiment of the present invention in combination
5 with a visual display means. The visual display means
10 is of the dot-matrix type, that is it comprises an
array of pixels 12 each of which is formed by a light
source such as an LED or the end of an optical fibre.
The pixels 12 are mounted on a backing element 14 as
is well known in the art.

The assembly 16 of the present invention
comprises an array of cells 18 adjacent a transparent
cover sheet 20. The walls 22 of the cells 18 are
15 formed by a honeycomb mesh creating contiguous
hexagonal cells as best seen in the plan view of
Figure 2. The cells 18 are thus open at each end.
The honeycomb mesh is typically formed of a material
such as aluminium, thus making the walls 22 of the
20 cells 18 reflective.

The array of cells 18 is dimensioned so that the
assembly can be fitted over the visual display means
10 with each pixel 12 aligned with the centre of one
25 cell 18. Thus, light from each pixel 12 passes
through a cell 18 and can be observed through the
transparent top sheet 20 by an observer 24.
Reflection from the walls 22 of the cells 18 helps to
optimise the amount of light transmitted through the
30 cells 18, thereby enhancing the brightness of the
image seen by the observer 24. The walls 22 may have
a surface treatment to improve their reflectivity.
Additionally, lenses (not shown) may be incorporated
into each cell 18 to capture substantially all of the
35 light from each pixel 12.

Employing the assembly 16 of the present

invention in combination with a visual display means 10 provides a number of benefits. First, in terms of optical performance, internal reflection within each cell 18 means that the cells 18 are flooded with
5 light. This in turn means the image seen by the observer 24 comprises blocks of solid colour rather than dots of colour on a black background.

In addition, the viewing angle and viewing
10 distance ranges are increased. Thus, an observer may view the display from a greater range of angles and from a greater range of distances and still see a coherent and legible image.

A further advantage is that the top sheet 20 may
15 be designed to provide structural performance, when combined with a bottom perforated sheet, to the whole display unit, i.e. it may be a load bearing element, allowing the unit to be used to create or form part of
20 a floor or wall structure.

The top sheet 20 may also provide a
weatherproofing function, allowing the display system
to be used externally without further modification to
25 the visual display means 10 itself.

The top sheet 20 may also be adapted to further
enhance the optical performance by means of surface
treatments and/or it may be moulded to form lenses
30 (not shown) aligned with each cell 18 of the array to improve the light output.

The cells 18 need not be hexagonal cells of a
honeycomb structure as illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

35 The cells 18 may instead be formed of cylindrical tubes 26, packed together as illustrated in Figure 3. Alternatively, a mesh 28 with substantially square

apertures could be used as shown in Figure 4. Another arrangement is an array of equilateral triangles as seen in Figure 5. Another option is for each cell 18 to be in the form of a parabolic reflector as seen in Figure 6, having an opening in the centre of the base of each parabola to receive the pixel 12.

In some circumstances it is desirable to have some diffusion of light between adjacent pixels. This enables the improved rendering of images which have smooth edged forms or soft colour graduations. In order to allow for some diffusion between adjacent pixels, one option is to provide a form of lens (30) on the top of the walls 22 of the cells 18, extending between the walls 22 and the cover sheet 20. This is illustrated in Figure 7. This network of lenses may be created as a separate part to be included in the assembly or may be formed by using a liquid adhesive, which sets into a light transmitting bead between the cells 18 and the cover sheet 20. This arrangement may be incorporated in any of the embodiments described.

A further possibility is to form each cell 18 as a light guide such as a solid glass or plastic element with a plane face at each end, which allows substantially all the incident light to pass through without reflection, constituting the "open ends" of the cell. The side walls of the light guide which join these end faces, however, provide for substantially total internal reflection so that all the light entering the light guide is transmitted through it and out of the opposing end face.

It will be apparent from these examples of cells 18 are not exhaustive and other possibilities exist.

Thus, the present invention makes it possible to

provide large visual display systems with excellent optical performance which are useable both internally and externally and are capable of bearing loads and forming structural members.

CLAIMS

1. An assembly for covering a visual display means
having an array of pixels, the assembly comprising an
5 array of cells with reflective walls and an opening at
each end, and a transparent cover sheet adjacent the
open ends of the cells on one side of the array,
wherein the array is dimensioned such that in use each
cell is aligned with one pixel of the visual display
10 means.

2. An assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein the
cells are contiguous.

15 3. An assembly as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2,
wherein each cell comprises a tube open at each end.

4. An assembly as claimed in any preceding claim,
wherein the array comprises a honeycomb mesh creating
20 adjacent hexagonal cells.

5. An assembly as claimed in any of claims 1 to 3
wherein the array comprises a mesh with substantially
square apertures.

25 6. An assembly as claimed in any of claims 1 to 3,
wherein each cell comprises a parabolic reflector
having an opening in the centre of the base for
alignment with pixel.

30 7. An assembly as claimed in any of claims 1 to 3,
wherein each cell comprises a light guide.

8. An assembly as claimed in any preceding claim
35 wherein the walls of the cells are provided with a
surface treatment to increase their reflectivity.

9. An assembly as claimed in any preceding claim further comprising a lens in each cell.

10. An assembly as claimed in any preceding claim,
5 wherein the cover sheet comprises glass or plastic.

11. An assembly as claimed in any preceding claim,
further comprising a bottom sheet to create a load
bearing element.

10 12. An assembly as claimed in any preceding claim,
wherein the cover sheet provides weather proofing to
the visual display means.

15 13. An assembly as claimed in any preceding claim,
wherein the cover sheet is shaped to form a lens
aligned with each cell of the array.

20 14. An assembly as claimed in any preceding claim,
wherein the cover sheet is provided with a surface
treatment to improve the optical performance.

25 15. Assembly as claimed in any preceding claim,
further comprising lens means arranged between the
array of cells and the cover sheet, aligned with the
walls of the cells, operable to diffuse light between
adjacent cells.

30 16. An assembly as claimed in claim 15, wherein the
lense means is provided by adhesive between the cells
and the cover sheet.

35 17. A visual display system, comprising an assembly
as claimed in any preceding claim secured to a visual
display means having an array of pixels, such that the
array of cells is sandwiched between the cover sheet
and the visual display means.

18. An assembly substantially as hereinbefore described and with reference to the accompanying drawings.

5 19. A visual display system substantially as hereinbefore described and illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

10

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fig. 1

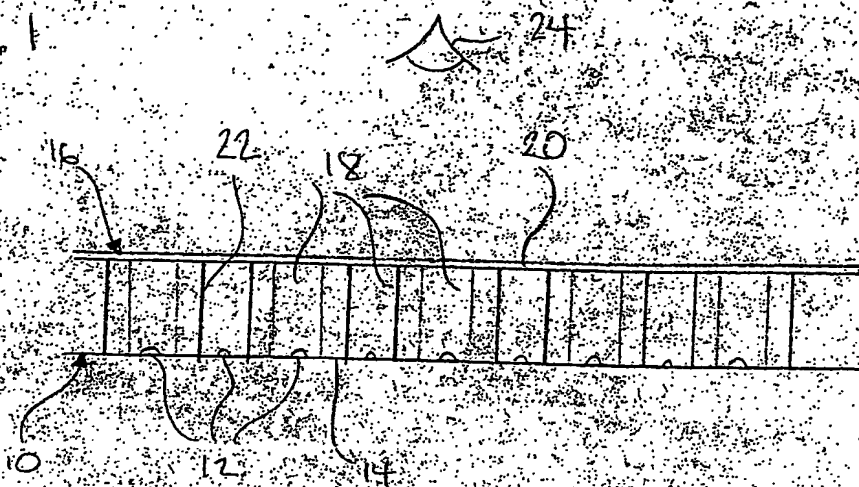


fig. 2

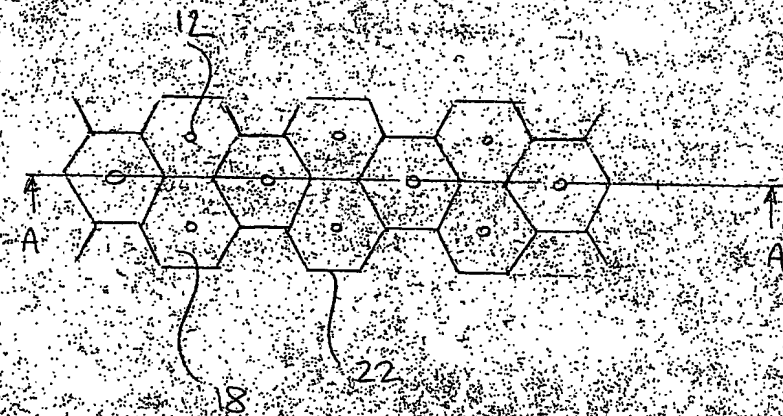


fig. 3

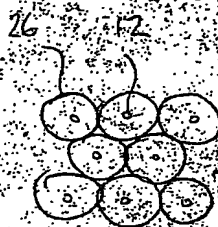


fig. 4

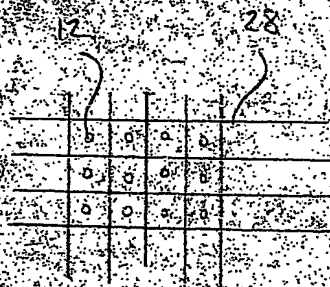


fig. 6



fig 5

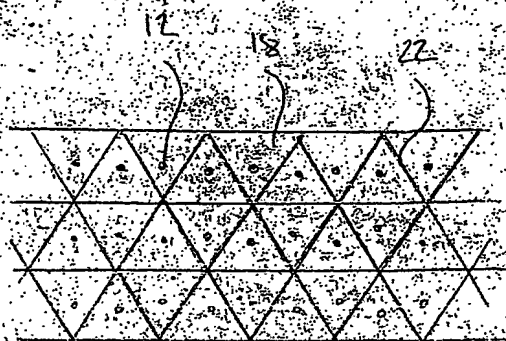
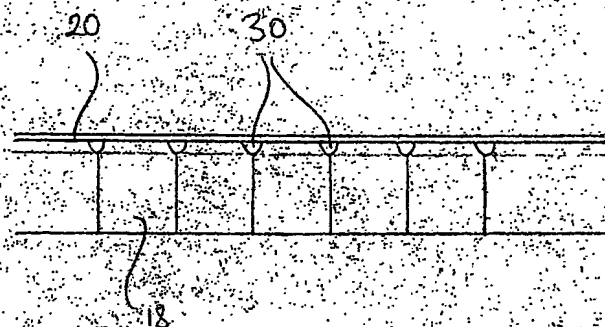


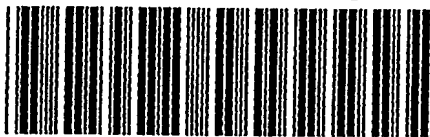
fig 7



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